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ABSTRACT

The project entitled "A Study of Schooling" went to 7 regions in the U.S. to collect data on 13 widely representative elementary schools and the 25 junior and senior high schools they feed. School board members, administrators, 17,000 students, 8,500 parents, and 1,350 teachers were interviewed or responded to questionnaires. Over 1,000 classrooms were observed. Eight major findings from this study are discussed in this document: (1) the states substantially agree on a dozen major educational goals; (2) parents want schools to perform a caring, nurturing, custodial function in addition to providing instruction; (3) neither the states nor the districts studied clearly articulate their educational goals; (4) secondary school students have values, interests, and problems not mediated by home, school, or church; (5) shortcomings and inequities in the opportunities to gain a general education are encountered by children during their first days in school; (6) these inequities are increased in secondary schools by the allocation of teachers; (7) ability grouping and tracking lead to markedly different educational experiences at the secondary level for students of different backgrounds; and (8) the teachers sampled entered the profession for good reasons but encountered difficulties in using practices they believed in. (Author/PGD)

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AN AGENDA FOR IMPROVING OUR SCHOOLS

John I. Goodlad

This paper was the Walter D. Cocking Lecture presented at the Thirty-fifth annual National Convention of Professors of Educational Administration in August 1981. The Institute for School Executives would like to express its appreciation to Dean Goodlad for his permission to reproduce this important and timely paper.

I

The public school system of the United States is experiencing a series of shock waves of grave proportions. Our school system has had troubles, real and imagined, before. Indeed, a back-to-basics movement of the early 1950s was fueled by books with such dolefully fearsome titles as *Why Johnny Can't Read*, *Crisis in Education*, and *Educational Wastelands*. It is sometimes stylish to kick the schools, just as it sometimes is fashionable to praise them.

It is essential, however, to recognize the difference between yesterday's and today's malaise. Yesterday, the attacks usually were against the people who ran the schools—their wrongheadedness or their mindlessness—but rarely against the institution. And people were not running away from their schools.

Today, as often as not, the attacks are against the institution itself, not just those who run it. Declining confidence parallels our loss of faith in government, the judicial system, the professions, that great god of science, and frighteningly, even ourselves. A decade ago, Robert M. Hutchins pondered the school's sudden fall from grace and wondered what had happened to the institution that so recently had been ". . . the foundation of our freedom, the guarantee of our future, the cause of our prosperity and power, the bastion of our security, the bright and shining beacon . . . the source of our enlightenment, the public school."[1]

But Hutchins had not seen anything yet. We have been through a dizzying decade. Many school districts today are under court orders to desegregate. Integrated schools try to cope with the problems of providing quality education for increasingly diverse student populations; over fifty different languages are the mother tongues of various segments of the school population in California. The percentage of school-age whites graduating from our high schools has stabilized. The percentage of graduating Blacks has increased markedly. But the large number of students from Hispanic origins dropping out of school is a worrisome problem. The number of parents, predominantly white, seeking private schools for their children is accelerating. Nationwide it is estimated that nearly one child in five is now in a private school. Schools in some sections of many cities are overenrolled; schools in other sections are closed because of declining enrollments. The shifting base of funding and various federal and state efforts to assure equity and improve schools have brought government more and more into the classroom. School administrators increasingly find themselves spending far more time on crises and complying with regulations than on curricular and instructional improvement.

This is not all. The most serious problems are the least visible. For more than two decades, a culture virtually unique to the young has been emerging. Elements of this culture are obscure and incomprehensible to many adults. This youth culture has been catered to and cultivated by television. Television has educated while it has entertained.

A youth graduating from high school this coming June will have spent approximately 8.5 percent of his or her life in school, 9.0 to 10.0 percent before a television set. In the teaching of moral values, attitudes, and contemporary life, television may have been for this youth and millions more the common school. To what extent is Peter Sellers's portrayal of Chauncey Gardner in the movie *Being There* a comic spoof or a chillingly prophetic glimpse into a future television generation?

Accompanying the rise of this youth culture and of television as a powerful educative force has been a steady erosion of potency among that triad of institutions traditionally educating the young: home, church, and school. At the very time our young people so badly need the moral direction and nurturing support of all three, each is beset with its own problems of survival. Divorce and working parents have cut seriously into the home's capacity to teach and nurture. Attendance of children and youth at Sunday school has plummeted to an all-time low. Teachers do not view themselves as society's agents for teaching piety and civility. For many young people, moral education is acquired on the streets and from televised merchandising.

Not only are the public schools no longer buttressed to the degree they were by household and church, they no longer enjoy the constant support of the coalition that built and strengthened the system. From time to time today, we see associations of state school boards, parents, administrators, and teachers pulling together for or against some legislative measure affecting the schools. But the occasions become increasingly rare and, as often as not, are directed toward maintaining rather than advocating something. Indeed, these groups sometimes spend time and energy pulling on one another rather than for the schools. Finally, educators are segmented among themselves: administrators from teachers, elementary from secondary teachers, teachers of one subject from teachers of another, and so on.

The several groups do not share a common body of data about our schools from which to build an agenda. Lacking this agenda, we grope about with partial solutions to problems half obscured. We can and must do better.

II

I have presented a formidable and, I fear, depressing description of the circumstances surrounding schooling. I hope I have not numbed you into a state of inertia. Personally, I am cautiously optimistic about the future. My optimism stems from four subtle shifts now beginning to manifest themselves in our society.

First, many people are tired of kicking the schools and of hearing dire things about them. Indeed, those connected with the schools we studied considered their own schools to be pretty good. Most of the schools in our sample received an average grade of B; only a handful, nearly all at the senior high level, received an average grade of C.

Second, there is at last a growing view that improving our schools will take time and will demand the close collaboration of many groups. New coalitions in support of education and schooling might well flow from such a perspective.

Third, more people are coming to realize that simplistic, naive diagnoses of the problems produce ineffectual solutions. Slogans such as "more discipline" may get some school board members elected, but slogans alone don't produce much mileage down the road to improving schools.

Fourth, we are coming to see that the problems manifesting themselves in schools usually are embedded pervasively in the surrounding society. Schools mirror these problems but wiping away at the mirror only obscures the problems reflected there.

There is an old saying: If we want to change and improve something, first we must understand it. My purpose today is to add something to our understanding of schools in the hope that this will produce a short agenda of problems worthy of our time, energy, and money.

I draw from a comprehensive study of selected schools now drawing to a close. Entitled *A Study of Schooling*, the project has been supported at different stages by 11 private philanthropic foundations and two federal agencies.[2] The inquiry focused on many aspects of a few schools rather than a few aspects of many schools. From seven regions of the United States we selected 13 elementary schools and the 25 junior and senior high schools into which the graduates of these elementary schools progressed. In our judgment, this sample of 38 schools was highly representative of schools familiar to most of us: urban, suburban, and rural schools; large and small schools; schools of diverse ethnic and racial composition; schools enrolling all or mostly Black students or students of Hispanic origin; schools in communities of varied parental incomes. This sample of schools enabled us to study all members of the districts' school boards, the superintendents, the principals, over seventeen thousand students, more than eighty-five hundred parents, and thirteen hundred fifty teachers through interviews and questionnaires. While "in residence" in these communities for continuous periods of more than twenty school days for each, we observed over one thousand classrooms in operation, repeating these observations a second and usually a third time. We inquired into virtually every major aspect of school and classroom operation. Few, if any, studies have concentrated in such depth on so many schools. The resulting body of information is, I believe, the largest in captivity.

My purpose today is to illuminate the kinds of problems to be addressed in improving our schools. Time restricts me to just a few and virtually precludes more than a glimpse of possible solutions. In a summary volume to be published early in 1982, I present a detailed discussion of findings and both a long-term and a short-term agenda. Colleagues are writing up to eight additional books based on technical reports now becoming available.

III

I turn to some of the findings.

1. *There appears to be substantial agreement among the states on a comprehensive set of educational goals sufficient to give direction to program planning at the level of the local district and the individual school.* Consequently, we should stop behaving as though we lack, throughout the system, a sense of direction toward which we might steer in concert. I can make this generalization with confidence because it arises not just out of the data from the schools we studied but out of both an historical and a contemporary analysis of documents dealing directly or indirectly with what our schools are for.

Beginning over three hundred years ago with the simple charge that providing enough learning to enable young people to understand the principles of religion and the laws of the land, the educational expectations for our public school system have expanded steadily to the present. To the early academic goals were added the goals of citizenship, preparation for a vocation, and personal development. Each addition to the educational responsibility of the school was accompanied by some decline in the educational role of the home. Little by little there was a weakening of the close collaboration among household, church, and school in assuring education for the young.

We examined documents provided by the commissioners of education in all 50 states. Careful examination of these documents led us to the conclusion that there is relatively common agreement on about a dozen major goals in four broad areas: intellectual, social and civic, vocational, and personal. I list these and the subdivisions within them in the summary volume now being prepared. Clearly they provide a mandate for policy and practice at all levels of the educational system.

2. *Data from* A Study of Schooling *support the proposition that the parents surveyed want not only instruction for their children in all four of these goal areas but they also want their schools to perform a caring, nurturing, custodial function.* Over eight thousand parents responded to two different kinds of questions regarding their goal preferences. First, we asked them to rate each goal area on a five-point scale ranging from "of great importance" to "of no importance." We also asked them to check their preference if they could have only one choice from the four areas.

All four goal areas, with the exception of vocational education in the elementary school, received ratings at the upper end of the scale—that is, a score of five or four signifying high importance. Not surprisingly, given only one choice, approximately 50 percent of the parent group chose the intellectual goal area. But to me the surprising thing is that the remaining 50 percent distributed their choices across the remaining three categories.

We also asked the parents to respond to a number of questions pertaining to such things as their children's safety, whether average children were given enough attention, whether their own child received enough individual attention, and so on. The conclusion I draw from their answers to these questions, which essentially address the school's custodial role, is that the parents who responded want and expect their children to be safe at school, known by someone in the school, and provided with individual attention in both instructional and personal areas.

The conclusion I draw from the data is that these parents, not surprisingly, want it all for their children: education in all four of the goal areas which have emerged in this country and a degree of personal attention and nurturing. How and why did we allow ourselves to be led astray by the rhetoric of one more back-to-basics movement? We must not suffer our schools to be pushed first this way and then that by changes in fashion that

are more rhetorical than substantive. Rarely are our schools at any given time as good or as bad as current excesses in rhetoric suggest them to be. We must remember that our educational expectations are broad and comprehensive and remain so, even during periods of excessive talk to the contrary.

3. *I am forced to conclude that, taken as a group, neither the 50 states nor the school districts of the schools we studied articulate clearly the mandate suggested by our historical and contemporary analyses of goals for education and schooling.* The documents intended to articulate the state and district mission vary enormously in format and content. We were able to find the goal areas indicated above but only through a great deal of digging and probing. In general, the district documents were more specific than the ones produced at the state level.

Some states produced no written overall goals. Instead, there were objectives for the several subject fields. Most states provided an alternating flow of philosophical beliefs, admonitions regarding community involvement in school affairs at the local level, pedagogical instructions in subject fields, and various different kinds of goal statements.

Given the fact that constitutional omission of federal responsibility for education automatically places major responsibility on the states, the general failure of several states to provide a clear articulation of what our schools are for must not be regarded lightly. We hear a great deal of talk at the highest level of state government about the accountability of local boards, administrators, and teachers. But state leaders should look first to their own responsibility and accompanying accountability in regard to providing overall direction to local districts and schools. In view of the fact that substantial agreement already exists, the formulation of a state mandate in the form of a dozen or so goals for all schools does not appear to be an arduous undertaking.

4. *The responses to our questions from junior and senior high school students in our sample support the proposition that they have values, interests, and problems not appearing to be mediated by home, school, or church, and that they have preoccupations which often transcend and supersede the academic side of schooling.* The peer group always has been an educative force. But until relatively recent times, only those adolescents at the fringes of peer group acceptance shared values and ways of behaving that were sharply divergent from the more central core of values represented by home, school, church, and indeed, the peer group itself. The sheer magnitude of the youth group in recent years has provided a profitable audience for television which, in turn, has provided a large part of the moral education of the young while purporting only to entertain.

Students' responses to just three of our many questions are revealing and disturbing. We asked them to select just one category in identifying the most popular types of students, to choose the one thing they liked best about their school, and to choose the one most serious problem in their school. At the junior high level, just two categories—"good-looking students" and "athletes"—accounted for 60 percent of the students' choices of the most popular students. At the senior high level, these two categories together accounted for a whopping 78.6 percent of the responses, averaged across schools. The category "smart students" accounted for only 13.5 percent of the choices at the junior high level and dropped to a meager 7 percent among senior high students. If one is smart in school, it appears to be a good idea to be also athletic and good looking.

When asked to choose from 12 possibilities in answering the question, "What is the one best thing about this school?" just three categories accounted for 62 percent of the choices at the junior high level and 58 percent at the senior high level. These three categories were "friends," "sports activities," and "good student attitudes." You will note that there is nothing here about the academic side of school life. Indeed, the category "nothing," chosen by approximately 8 percent at both levels, outranked "the classes I am taking" (7%) and "teachers" (averaging only 3.4% at the junior high level and 5% among the senior highs in our sample).

"The one biggest problem at this school" was perceived at the junior high level to be student misbehavior and at the senior high level drug and alcohol use. The total choosing one or the other of these categories first was 56 percent among junior highs and 36 percent among the senior high schools. Problems related to curriculum and instruction paled beside these daily concerns of the peer group.

We may be disturbed about what these responses imply, but we should be even more disturbed about the values widely promulgated in our society out of which these youth values emerge. At one time home, school, and church endeavored to filter out the least desirable aspects of adult life and to inculcate in the young only virtues. Much less of this now occurs. It is not surprising that high school youth look up to their athletic and good-looking peers when they hear every day about the high pay and status adults give to athletes and the good-looking people in television and in the movies. How reasonable is it to think that our relatively drab schools can be potent in the lives of the young when so many alternatives outside of school are made to look attractive and seductive?

If we want to modify the values of the youth culture and, in turn, the ambience of schools, we will need to provide our young people with a wide array of alternative, attractive role models: real doctors who don't perform miracles on tv, artists who paint or write for satisfaction as well as those who also make a living at it, politicians who make headlines for their wisdom rather than their shenanigans, scientists who explore the ocean's depths unaccompanied by shapely movie starlets, civil servants so serious about making democracy work that they forget to record their hours of overtime, restaurant owners who respond creatively to the fact that eating out is one of this country's major forms of recreation, musicians in the pit orchestra who take satisfaction in the knowledge that their performances contribute significantly to the wonder of what we see on the stage. These people, too, are worth emulating.

The implications for bringing adults into the school and taking high school students to where adults work and congregate are many. They range from drastically changing the nature and locale of vocational education to a variety of work internships in business and industry to greater access to community colleges for high school juniors and seniors to periods of apprenticeship with scholars, artists, and those who govern. And, of course, there are profound implications here for what all of this implies for rethinking the central role of the public school so as to provide a common general education for all children and youth.

5. *Shortcomings and inequities in the opportunities to gain this general education are encountered by children during their very first days in kindergarten or the first grade.* I make this generalization as though we had studied a very large number of schools in the United States. But our findings are so striking that I have difficulty not assuming the problem I now address to be widespread.

Increasingly, we are learning that the actual amount of time children spend in the classroom is in itself one of the most significant factors in their academic achievement. But there appear to be substantial school-to-school differences in the amount of time children spend in an instructional setting. The average weekly time for our sample of elementary schools was 22.5 hours. However, the children at Newport Elementary School averaged only 18.5 hours a week in an instructional setting. The average time at Dennison Elementary School, by contrast, was 50 percent greater—27.5 hours. It becomes startlingly evident that the initial

opportunities for learning at Dennison are very much greater than at Newport. We have heard a great deal about equality of educational opportunity in this country but one of the most glaring types of inequality seems to have escaped our attention. And it has nothing to do with income or race.

The significance of these gross differences between schools becomes strikingly apparent when we compare the amounts of time devoted to the various subject fields. The schools of our sample devoted about 53 percent of the weekly instructional time to the language arts (including reading) and mathematics—about 7.5 hours to the former and about 4.5 hours to the latter. It seems to me that 90 minutes of instruction each day in language arts and 54 minutes a day in mathematics should satisfy the expectations of those of us who consider these two areas to be very basic. Dennison Elementary School, referred to above, with its 27.5 hours of instruction each week, not only was able to devote about this amount of time to these two subject areas but also to allocate an hour a day to social studies and another hour to science. Newport, on the other hand, with its short instructional week, devoted a meager 22 minutes a day to social studies and a paltry 13.5 minutes, on a daily average, to science.

It appears that we can have our cake and eat it, too. We can have a broad curriculum within which almost everybody's definition of basic education is included by assuring sufficient instructional time in the week. I consider the average of 22.5 hours for the elementary schools in our sample to be low and recommend 25 hours as the standard to be sought. Achieving this standard will add no dollars to the budget. But it does call for the principal and teachers of each school to take inventory of how much time is lost through slow starts in the morning, of recess or lunch breaks that are allowed to run into additional time, of cleaning-up activities that use excessive time at the end of each day, and so on. I believe that all schools not now achieving the 25 hours each week are quite capable of gaining the additional minutes of time each day without adding to the length of the school day. I know of nothing that would improve our elementary schools more at less cost.

6. *No doubt, these school-to-school inequities in the use of time extend into the junior and senior high schools. But the secondary level of the system adds further inequities through varying allocations of teachers to instruction in the several subject areas of the curriculum.* In seeking to determine the spread and balance of curricular offerings in junior and senior high schools, we added up the course offerings in each subject field and converted them to the equivalent of full-time teachers. This gave us a picture of how each school allocated its total faculty and, consequently, a reflection of curricular priorities.

The resulting picture at the junior high level is one of considerable balance except for the neglect of foreign languages, which received only 1 percent of the available teachers. Averaged across schools, the allocation of teachers was as follows: 22 percent to English, 18 percent to mathematics, 14 percent to social studies, 12 percent to science, 12 percent to vocational education, 11 percent to physical education, and 10 percent to the arts. But the considerable school-to-school variability tells us that students' curricular experiences are heavily dependent on the school they happen to attend. Palisades Junior High apparently believes mathematics to be very important. It allocated the equivalent of 22 percent of its teaching force to this field; Woodlake allocated only 13 percent. Teachers of English ranged from 15 percent at Euclid to 31 percent at Crestview. One wonders why Manchester allocated only 4 of 54 subject teachers to science while Laurel assigned 3 out of 15 to this field. In vocational education, the range was from a mere 4 percent at Laurel to a high of 22 percent at Manchester.

One significant difference between the junior and senior high schools in our sample is the jump upward in the allocation of teaching personnel to vocational education. The overall average was 23 percent, the largest of all subject fields. Needless to say, this increase was at the expense of some academic subjects. What boggles the mind are schools such as Fairfield and Euclid. Fairfield devoted 42 percent of its teaching force to vocational education—more than the total for English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Euclid allocated 41 percent to this field—equal to the total of all four of these academic subjects plus foreign languages. At Newport High, on the other hand, teachers in these five academic fields totaled 61 percent of the teaching force, as contrasted with only 13 percent in vocational education. Why such extraordinary differences? Neither Fairfield nor Euclid was an inner-city school with a charge to prepare students for jobs. Indeed, the parents and even the teaching staff, heavily representing vocational education, would have preferred a more academic orientation at Fairfield.

I cannot put forward any rational argument to justify or defend these marked school-to-school curricular differences. To use an argument of justification based on local control would be a gross misinterpretation of the meaning of this concept. Similarly, it would be a misinterpretation of the concept of individual differences to defend such variability on the ground that students vary in their interests and abilities. No, I fear that what I have described is more the result of neglect and omission than the deliberate design of policy and practice.

7. *In the schools of our sample, it appears that a self-fulfilling prophecy begins in the primary grades and eventuates in markedly different educational experiences in junior and senior high schools for students of differing economic and racial background.* At the age of five or six, each child in this country experiences an abrupt and sometimes traumatic transition. He or she begins school. The child leaves behind a life of relative freedom and unshared attention to become one of many. There are now finite limitations to the materials and attention available, to the range of activities in which one may engage, and even to the kind and amount of rewards available.

Some children take readily to the daily tasks of reading, listening, completing workbooks, and taking quizzes. Many even like the passivity and the need to conform. Others do not. They prefer building things, manipulating things, and working with their hands in various ways. They often are restless under the constraints and frequently test the limits of control. What they do and like best is not often the object of positive reinforcement. Very early, children are sorted into instructional groups—usually three—for such subjects as reading and mathematics.

The top and bottom groups share quite differentially in the available rewards. And they grow increasingly apart in their accomplishments and their accompanying feelings of success. Our data show a steady decline in students' academic self-concepts from the end of the primary grades to the upper years of secondary school. That is, they feel decreasingly good about how they are doing in school. Most of this decline is accounted for by the students who make up the lowest groups in the primary grades, who are the least successful students in later schooling, and who share least in the rewards. By the time these slowest students reach the secondary schools, they become, almost automatically, candidates for the lowest tracks in the various subjects.

Tracking often is recommended as a solution to dealing with increasingly diverse student populations in our secondary schools. At the turn of the century, our secondary schools did not have to cope with such diversity. Only about 10 percent of students completing the elementary school went on to the secondary level, and most of these were college bound. The situation today is vastly different and will continue to be. But there is little point in recommending tracking as a solution. The secondary schools in our sample were predominantly tracked and there is little reason to believe that schools elsewhere in the na-

tion are markedly different.

Actually, there were two different kinds of divisions in the instructional programs of the schools we studied. It soon became clear that the sudden expansion in vocational education offerings represented an effort to provide an alternative to academic programs for students not contemplating education beyond the high school. Many of the programs offered represented not an orientation to jobs and work for all students but training for specific jobs for some students. These jobs tended to be those involving less complicated technology and requiring manual skills rather than general education and the intellectual competence associated with it. The students in these classes tended to be disproportionately from low income and minority families. These tend to be the students who are disproportionately represented in the lowest groups for reading and mathematics in the elementary school. It appears that we have here a self-fulfilling prophecy by means of which some students—mostly white and somewhat more affluent—are destined primarily for academic studies while others—mostly poor and Black or Hispanic—are destined for vocational training and jobs requiring limited skills and relatively low pay.

A second division occurs within the academic subjects which, in the schools of our sample, more frequently than not were divided into three tracks—high, medium, and low.

We studied the following aspects of these classes: the distribution of students according to economic background and race, the curriculum, instructional practices, and social relationships and learning interactions. Our findings are clear, striking, and troublesome in their implications.

7.1 Significantly higher proportions of white students than those in the school population as a whole were found in classes identified as high track. Conversely, disproportionately large proportions of poor and minority students were found in the low tracks of the multiracial schools included in our sample.

7.2 We identified the content of the high tracks as what might be called high-status knowledge—that which leads to higher education and the greater opportunities for social and economic power which results from high educational attainment. Further, teachers of high-track classes listed as part of the course content activities and skills that require higher levels of cognition than did teachers of classes at other track levels. Teachers of high-track classes were more likely than others to be concerned that their students learn behaviors that would enable them to function autonomously and think critically. Students in low-track classes, on the other hand, rarely encountered these types of learnings. The knowledge provided to students in these classes was typically basic literacy material or topics oriented to everyday life and work. Activities and skills listed by teachers usually required only low-level intellectual processes. The behavior expected of students in the low-track classes was that of conforming to rules and expectations. Students in high-track classes spent more time on instructional activity and were expected by their teachers to spend more time on homework than were students in the low tracks.

7.3 Students in high tracks, more than students in low tracks, experienced classes in which teachers more frequently varied their instructional behavior, taught with greater clarity, and expressed greater enthusiasm—three practices identified in the research literature as positively related to student achievement.

7.4 Our data point clearly to the conclusion that students in high tracks had interactions with others which were more positive and, therefore, more likely to enhance their classroom experiences than did low-track students who experienced more negative classroom relationships which, in turn, were more likely to alienate them from the classroom. Students in low-track classes saw their teachers as the most punitive and the least concerned about them. Teachers in these classes spent the most class time of any of the groups of teachers on student behavior and discipline.

The general picture emerging from our findings is that the types of students who adjust less well to the expectations of schooling in the early grades and who began to feel less good about themselves in regard to academic work tend also to be those who later find themselves in the lowest tracks of the secondary schools. These lowest tracks, it would appear, provide less support in the learning process than do the upper and, indeed, the middle tracks. In brief, those students who most need encouragement and nurturing in the learning process receive the least.

There is, then, a strange upside-down character about schooling. There is also a consistency. Those who start out with the least success and satisfaction end up with the least. One could argue that this is life. And if we want our schools to reflect rather accurately life in the surrounding society, then our schools do a superb job. If, on the other hand, our desire is to produce successive generations of young people, all of whom have the general education required for successful participation in society and all of whom experience satisfaction in learning, then we fail quite miserably.

Let me add one finding which I find gratifying. I have long argued that, in the long run, the best learning environment is one in which students of differing backgrounds, interests, skills, and capabilities learn and work together, in an environment of mutual support and encouragement and for the purpose of generating the highest possible level of success for all. There have been some extraordinarily successful experiments guided by such a philosophy which show that the most intellectually able are not at all hindered in such a setting and the less intellectually adept are aided immensely. Indeed, it sometimes becomes difficult to determine the supposed distribution of "good" as opposed to "poor" learners. The differential in learning rate which often is as great as 5:1 is reduced to about 1.5:1, without loss to the swiftest. Professor Benjamin S. Bloom and his students, working with such a philosophy, have been achieving notable success in programs of "master learning."

In our sample, we found a substantial number of classrooms that had not been tracked. That is, students were simply enrolled in a class heterogeneously without respect to their present and past accomplishments. The conventional wisdom, not supported by research, is that the various components of classroom life—content, instructional method, student interaction, and the like—drop to the lowest common denominator. This we did not find in the mixed classes we studied. Rather, the classes in which students were grouped heterogeneously tended to look very much like the classes in the upper tracks rather than like the classes in the lower tracks. In other words, the somewhat old-fashioned practice of taking a class of students representing various accomplishments and working with these students as though all are capable of learning, given an opportunity to experience good instruction, may very well be the best answer to meeting the needs of the diverse populations of today's secondary schools.

8. *Most of the teachers in our sample entered teaching for the very best reasons, but apparently encountered formidable difficulties in seeking to use the practices they believed in, especially at the secondary level.* Given a choice of several reasons for entering teaching, the largest percentage chose such things as teaching a subject or being of service. That is, they wanted to go into teaching because they thought they would enjoy the activity. Not surprisingly, few chose "money" and even fewer chose working conditions (which might include a long summer away from teaching).

The two things most likely to cause teachers to leave were "money" and various conditions conspiring to frustrate their teaching activity. Perhaps overgeneralizing, I see these teachers,

for the most part, viewing themselves as having something to give and wanting to give it—in the way one serves a client. Perhaps they had in mind alert, bright-eyed, well-scrubbed children anxious to acquire what they had to teach.

Some of this expectation, undoubtedly, is met in the early years of the elementary school. But anyone who has been around a senior or especially a junior high school these days and watched students come surging into a classroom might well wonder about the chances of one lone teacher seeking to create a receptive environment for learning about bionomial equations or the structure of the essay—none of it in glorious technicolor or panavision.

Reflecting for a moment on elements of the peer culture described earlier, it is clear that the task is an overwhelming one. Achieving and maintaining control become paramount in the eyes of many teachers. Consequently, the teaching activities in which they engage tend to be those most likely to assure a considerable amount of student passivity. A class quickly can get out of hand in a situation of small-group planning and decision-making. Most of the teachers in our sample favored the traditional perception of the teacher's role—that is, the teacher is in charge and makes most of the decisions. This is not the kind of setting, of course, in which students develop critical capacities of judgment. It is not the kind of setting in which they become autonomous decision makers. And yet, we frequently set such goals for schooling. It should not surprise us that, by the upper elementary grades, teaching practices become quite predictable: telling and questioning the students, seat work exercises involving textbooks and workbooks, quizzes, and the like.

There is very little praise for student performance, very little laughter and exuberance, and relatively little moving about, beyond the fourth grade. Teachers spend about 70 percent of classroom time engaged in the kind of instruction described; the remaining 30 percent of the time is devoted to controlling behavior and to managing classroom routines. The tone of most classrooms is placid as a result. Indeed, the word my colleagues and I find ourselves using most often to describe the emotional tone of the classroom is "flat."

We collected a vast amount of data on teachers, on what goes on in the classroom, and on the circumstances surrounding teaching. One conclusion I draw is that teachers, for various reasons, are not quite able to transcend their own experiences as students in the classroom. They tend to teach as they were taught, using the same kinds of materials with which they were taught. The professional preparation of most teachers provides merely a thin veneer beyond their general academic studies. It is assumed, quite mistakenly I believe, that they will acquire the full range of professional behaviors they need while on the job. We do not make similar assumptions, to my knowledge, about any of the major professions. Unfortunately, I must conclude that teaching, at this stage, is not one of the major professions, and I am not at all sure that we as a society are prepared to rectify the situation. Unless we do, it is difficult for me to see how the schools can improve significantly in their ability to engage the young in the knowledge and intellectual processes of humankind.

IV

Our data produce no villains. We are all culpable for whatever shortcomings the schools may possess. And since our schools inevitably reflect the shortcomings of their surrounding society, "all" means all of us—not just those connected with the schools.

Legislators and state board members must stop berating principals and teachers for their perceived inadequacies and rise to the challenge of setting clear directives in the form of a comprehensive set of goals for schooling. Local boards and superintendents of schools must look to the nature of the general education program they are providing and seek to redress the inequities and imbalances. Teachers and principals would do well to take inventory of the amount of time lost each day and assure the children in their school a full week of instruction and learning. All of us need to determine how to become better role models. And all of us must look to the assumptions we hold about "poor" and "slow" learners and address the fact that aptitude for learning is modifiable—more a consequence of opportunity than an unchanging condition. We must ask ourselves if we can continue to afford the casual attention we give to the selection, education, and reward of teachers. We associate our very best schools of medicine and business administration with the very best universities of the country. But the very best universities in the country are out of the teacher education business or they are rapidly getting out.

Perhaps most important of all, we must rebuild those coalitions of governmental leaders, school board members, parents, school administrators, and teachers necessary to a dynamic, renewing educational system. But this time the coalition must seek to do more than simply expand a system of schooling. Education is too significant to be left to schools alone. We need new configurations of educating institutions—household, school, church, business and industry, television, and the like—within which each institution does what it can do best. Given the importance and magnitude of what we must now do, a proposed solution such as "more discipline in the schools" is akin to tying the bowline around the cleat when our ship has already sunk beside the dock.

But the ship is still afloat, albeit listing somewhat. It simply needs the kind of rigorous attention and care we have not given it for quite some time.

FOOTNOTES

1. Robert M. Hutchins, "The Great Anti-School Campaign," *The Great Ideas Today*, p. 154 (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1972).

2. The Danforth Foundation, International Paper Company Foundation, the JDR III Fund, Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, Charles F. Kettering Foundation, the Lilly Endowment, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, National Institute of Education, the Needmor Fund, Pedamorphosis, Incorporated, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, United States Office of Education.

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